


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Wednesday, December 8,
2004

MICHIGAN

GAYLORD HERALD Times

A view from the 45th Parallel

Weather for Gaylord

 Mostly Cloudy
 Time: 6:00 pm
 Temp: 35 F
 RealFeel Temp: 32 F
 Humidity: 75 %
 Winds: S at 5.76 mph

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Top Stories**'Everyone should open their heart to a child'**

By Michael Jones, Staff Writer

OTSEGO LAKE TWP. - "When we first found out we couldn't have children of our own, I always asked myself, 'Why me?' But now I look at it as being lucky," Katherine Day said a week after adopting 5-month-old MacKenzie on Michigan Adoption Day. "My kids mean the world to me. They are a precious gift for both of us."

Day and her husband, Jesse, who are currently in the process of adopting their two foster-children, Elizabeth, 6 and John 4, were in 87th District Court Nov. 23, where Judge Michael Cooper finalized the adoption of MacKenzie, who has been with the Otsego Lake Township couple since her birth June 15.

The family was one of two who completed the adoption process in front of Judge Cooper last week, helping to spotlight November National Adoption Month.

"I would recommend adoption for anyone, especially of an older child," said Katherine. "Everyone should open their heart to a child. We need to provide an opportunity to those kids who are older to have the chance to be loved."

Before Katherine and Jesse were married five years ago, one of the things the couple knew was that they wanted to have a large family. They also knew Katherine would never be able to have children of her own and so the idea of adoption seemed only natural.

"Elizabeth and John have been with us for about three-and-a-half years and we knew right from the start we wanted to adopt them," said Katherine, who noted despite a bureaucratic snafu, the adoption of the brother and sister will happen sooner rather than later. "We're real close to seeing this happen. I know they're with us, that we love them and they are an everyday part of our lives."

In the case of MacKenzie, Katherine said things were on a fast track to happen. Katherine said her best friend, a single mother who was pregnant with MacKenzie, had made the decision earlier this year to ask the Days to be the parents to her unborn child.

"We were asked by MacKenzie's birth mother on Mother's Day if we wanted a precious gift," recalled Katherine. "We were very excited but needed some time to think about it before we said yes. MacKenzie was born out of love and she was a gift of love. We got a pretty baby who we love very much."

Katherine and Jesse say they are strong proponents of adoption, especially older children, who often are the victims of abuse and neglect. "It's so much harder to find families for older children," Katherine said. "We believe in adoption. I feel very blessed to have my three children. People tell us the children are very lucky to have us, but we say we're the ones who are lucky to have them."

Jesse, who was adopted from a foster home before the age of 3, said the best part of being a father is having the opportunity to spoil Elizabeth, John and MacKenzie. "It's been very rewarding for us to have a family when we didn't know if we ever would be able to," he said. "Katherine keeps saying that we'll have more and I guess we will, at least a couple more. There is a great need for adoptive parents for older children. It's something everyone should consider."

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